

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus provides QoS shaping/provisioning scheme for a data communications switch, such as a DiffServ aware router or a 802.1Q aware bridge, in which distinct internal and outbound priority values are assigned to a packet based on flow properties associated with an inbound packet. The flow properties used to assign the internal and outbound priority values may include at least one value from a packet field that is not dedicated to defining QoS. The internal priority value provides a priority to the packet during processing in the switch. The outbound priority value is applied to the packet in lieu of the inbound priority value prior to transmitting the packet from the switch. The flow properties used to determine the internal and outbound priority values may include, for example, Layer 2, Layer 3, and Layer 4 information encoded in the packet.